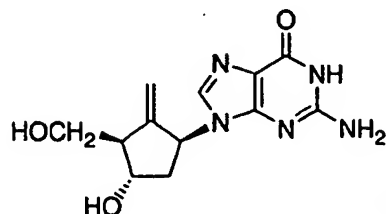


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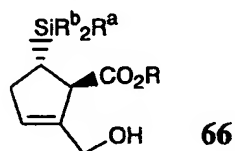
**In the Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A process for the preparation of entecavir having the formula



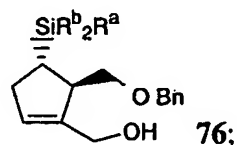
**21**, comprising:

- (a) treating an ester of the formula

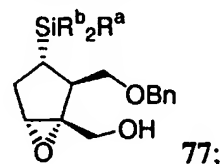


wherein  $R^a$  is allyl, phenyl,  $C_1$  to  $C_6$  alkylphenyl, or  $C_1$  to  $C_6$  alkoxyphenyl;  $R^b$  is  $C_1$  to  $C_6$  alkyl; and  $R$  is  $C_1$  to  $C_4$  alkyl or benzyl;

with an enol ether of acetone and an acid to protect the hydroxy group, followed by treatment with a hydride reagent to reduce the carboxylic acid ester moiety, and then alkylating the resulting alcohol with a benzyl halide and removing the enol ether hydroxy protecting group to give an allylic alcohol of the formula



- (b) epoxidizing the product from step (a) with a diastereoselective epoxidation to give a cyclopentane epoxide having the formula



- (c) treating the cyclopentane epoxide from step (b) with an alkali metal salt of a purine compound of formula